

N E W S R E L E A S E

Contact: Velessata Kelley
Kevin Callori
(916) 654-9029

Date: May 4, 2006

News Release No.: 06-18

‘Hire a Hero, Hire a Vet’ Draws State agencies together to serve California veterans

Sacramento: The “Hire a Hero, Hire a Vet” job and resource fair in Hanford today brought together more than 80 employers, several apprenticeship sponsors, over 100 resource and program providers and a new coalition of state agencies dedicated to serving the 2.3 million veterans who call California home.

“There are thousands of American troops now serving in the military around the world that need help in making a successful transition to civilian life when they return home,” said Labor & Workforce Development Agency Secretary Victoria Bradshaw. “With the unemployment rate for veterans ages 18-24 running as high as 15%, job services are particularly important for them, and with this fair we get to match veterans’ skill sets with high demand industries in the San Joaquin Valley.”

Not only do more veterans live in California than any other state, but each year 12,000 veterans enter the workforce in the state. The job and resource fair in Hanford exemplifies a level of collaboration among state agencies that provide services to these veterans – the Employment Development Department (EDD), the Department of Industrial Relations’ (DIR) Division of Apprenticeship, the California Community Colleges (CCC), and the Department of Veterans Affairs (CDVA).

Many veterans have the skill sets necessary to enter careers that are in high demand in the San Joaquin Valley, including logistics, goods movement and health care. A variety of resources are available to help veterans supplement their skills and make them eligible for new careers at an accelerated rate.

“This collaborative effort is a new model for assisting veterans with the often difficult transition to civilian life – not just a job fair – but truly a one stop resource,” said Tom Johnson, Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs. “It offers immediate access to employment, training, education, and veteran benefits in a single event. It is the model for the future.”

With the assistance of the EDD, veterans can obtain placement in the medical and health related fields through the PROVET program (Providing Opportunities for veterans). Veterans and their spouses can also transition into the classroom by participating in the Troops to Teachers program. In addition, EDD staff helps new veterans file for Unemployment Insurance benefits, develop resumes, find job openings and job training opportunities. These services are offered at One-Stop Centers throughout the state where veterans receive priority services.

The DIR administers apprenticeship and on-the-job training programs for veterans. These programs apply not only to traditional labor and construction trades, but also to manufacturing, health care, car repair, culinary arts, public safety and other professions. With an apprenticeship, participating veterans can earn a living, learn a lifelong career skill and collect on their GI Bill benefit.

Community Colleges offer veterans priority status and payment of training costs and assistance in living expenses. While the GI Bill can actually help cover costs of further education and career development, a dependent of a veteran may also be eligible for a Veteran's Fee Waiver to pay college tuition and fees.

#